

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1973
By: Delisi
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The State Board of Medical Examiners (BME) is charged with the oversight and processing of physician licensing in our state. Following medial liability tort reform, the number of physician license applications increased from about 2,500 in 2003 to more than 4,000 in 2006. However, the BME apparently has insufficient staff to process this increased volume of applications and a backlog has been created. This in turn has led to significant increases in amount of time needed to process an individual application. This legislation sets in place planning and reporting policies for the BME to facilitate the processing of physician licenses within a reasonable number of days.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

HB 1973 requires the executive director (director) of the Texas Medical Board (board), not later than January 1 of each year, to review the policy and procedures the board uses to issue a physician's license. The bill requires the board to perform a needs assessment to enable it to determine the performance goals that it must meet to reduce any unreasonable delays in the timely completion of the licensing process and to ensure the process is completed in a reasonable number of days. The board and the director shall ensure that any change in licensing policies or procedures is made only to increase the number of certain licenses issued, reduce unreasonable delays in the licensing process, and maintain public safety.

The bill requires the director to issue a report to governor, the Legislative Budget Board, and the relevant committees of the senate and the house of representatives on the state of the board's licensing process and include a projected yearly budget for certain board staffing and technology improvements.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.